

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claim 1 (original): In a hollow container suitable for containing fluid or granules, said container comprising a body and a neck, and having an opening in the neck defined by a rim through which contents of the container may flow, said container optionally having an external thread or other mechanical detent on the neck suitably adapted to receive a cap with internal threads or other mechanical means for retaining the cap in place on the neck of the container,

a removable sealing device, said device comprised of

a membranous seal, comprised of a flexible, frangible material having a reasonably low coefficient of friction, said membranous seal having a sealing component and a tab component,

with the sealing component suitably shaped to completely cover the opening in the neck of the container and the rim of the opening, and

with the tab component having a substantially elongated rectangular shape, with an attachment end and a gripping end located opposite the attachment end, and with a first edge and a second edge opposite the first edge,

the attachment end of the tab component attached to and integrated with the sealing component such that the tab component is oriented substantially perpendicular to the sealing component, and

the gripping end of the tab component having a greater width than the width of the remainder of the tab component or having any other suitable shape so as to make the tab component convenient to grasp; and

a sleeve, comprised of a flexible material having a reasonably low coefficient of friction, said sleeve having openings at either end and being suitably adapted to be positioned over and around the neck of the container such that the sleeve fits snugly about the neck of the container and below the external thread or other mechanical detent on the neck;

whereby the tab component is folded back upon the sealing component, then folded downward along the neck of the container and over the external thread or other mechanical detent on the neck, such that the tab component is positioned between the sleeve and the neck of the container with the gripping end of the tab component extending from the lower opening of the sleeve.

Claim 2 (original): The device of claim 1, wherein the membranous seal is comprised of multiple layers, with the outer surfaces of the outer layers having reasonably low coefficients of friction.

Claim 3 (original): The device of claim 1, wherein the gripping end of the tab component contains a central aperture, suitably adapted to accommodate a user's finger.

Claim 4 (original): The device of claim 1, wherein the membranous seal further comprises a first crimp, extending laterally across the width of the tab component from the first edge to the second edge and positioned where the attachment end of the tab component meets the sealing component; and

a second crimp, extending laterally across the width of the tab component from the first edge to the second edge and positioned between the first crimp and the gripping end of the tab

component such that the distance between the first crimp and the second crimp is substantially identical to the diameter of the opening of the neck of the container;

whereby the first crimp and the second crimp facilitate the folding of the tab component back upon the sealing component and downward along the neck of the container.

Claim 5 (original): The device of claim 1, wherein the sealing component further comprises

a first break line, having a first end and a second end, formed into the sealing component such that the sealing component is weakened along the first break line yet still retains the ability to provide an unbroken seal over the opening of the neck of the container; and

a second break line, having a first end and a second end, formed into the sealing component such that the sealing component is weakened along the second break line yet still retains the ability to provide an unbroken seal over the opening of the neck of the container;

whereby the first end of the first break line is adjacent to the first edge of the tab component and the first break line extends across and transects the sealing component, and the first end of the second break line is adjacent to the second edge of the tab component and the second break line extends across and transects the sealing component, with the first break line and the second break line diverging as they extend across the sealing component such that the distance between the second ends of the first and second break lines is greater than the distance between the first ends of the first and second break lines.

Claim 6 (original): The device of claim 5, wherein the sealing component further comprises

a first notch located adjacent to the first end of the first break line; and

a second notch located adjacent to the first end of the second break line;

whereby the first notch and the second notch facilitate tearing of the sealing component along the first and second break lines when an upward or lateral force is applied to the tab component.

Claim 7 (original): The device of claim 1, further comprising

a lever, constructed of a substantially rigid material and having a first end and a second end, said lever being attached to the sealing component with the first end of the lever positioned adjacent to the attachment end of the tab component and the second end of the lever positioned over the sealing component, such that the first end of the lever is lifted upward when an upward or lateral force is applied to the tab component, causing the second end of the lever to be forced downward, rupturing the sealing component.

Claim 8 (original): The device of claim 7, wherein the second end of the lever is shaped into a point to facilitate the lever's ability to rupture the sealing component.

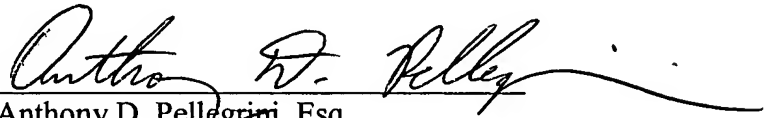
Claim 9 (original): The device of claim 1, further comprising multiple membranous seals, said membranous seals joined together in a continuous length, with the gripping end of the tab component of each membranous seal attached to the sealing component of an adjacent membranous seal, and with serrations formed at the junction of each membranous seal with each adjacent membranous seal.

Claim 10 (canceled).

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully suggests that the claims set forth herein place the claimed invention in order for allowance. Allowance of the present application therefore is in order, and is requested.

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